

REMARKS

The main claims 17 and 29 emphasize how the invention copes with a plurality of communications units. The effect of this amendment is to limit the claims to the case where the communications system contains at least two communications units (N greater than or equal to 2).

The Examiner has raised objection to claims 1, 4-5, 7-8 and 12-13 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,583,796 to Reese.

Reese is distinguished from the present invention in that it teaches a video security system rather than a digital communications system (see col. 1, lines 6-14). The communications system of claim 17 is distinguished by its prime function being that of the communication of data rather than the capturing of images for security reasons. The presence of communications between the various elements of the security system of Reese does not render its prime function that of communication of data. The teaching of Reese does not fall within the scope of claim 17. This results in a number of substantial differences in important details, as set out below.

The restriction of the teaching of Reese to security rather than communications systems leads to collateral divergence between the teaching of Reese and the present invention. In particular, Reese teaches no provision for supplying a protection unit with configuration data relating to communications units and storing said data in *respective* memory locations (i.e., one memory location per communication unit to be protected) and Reese teaches no provision for the selection from among a plurality of memory locations of the appropriate memory location associated with a fault-related communications unit.

Further statements by the Examiner will now be considered. At section 14 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that Reese discloses communications units (i.e., plural). This is

found to be a misrepresentation of the disclosure of Reese that discloses *no* communications units but a single *control* unit 14'. This agrees with the Examiner's statement at section 4 of the Office Action where the Examiner makes reference in Reese to *an* independently controllable switching control unit 135.

The communication unit of the present invention is dedicated to the communication of data to one or more similar units and has no control over those other units. The control unit of Reese is fundamentally different and has as its primary function the control of another unit of a different sort (i.e., a camera) that is not provided with any internal control means and is designed to be controlled externally.

The present invention as set out in method claim 17 and corresponding apparatus claim 29 advantageously provides a flexible and efficient system in which a plurality of communications units may be protected by a smaller number of protection units operable to store configuration data on the plurality of communications units thereby allowing for rapid changeover in the event of a fault. Hence, a high level of operational reliability is achieved with minimal cost in the way of protection units.

These advantages are not provided or hinted at by the teaching of Reese.

Allowance of claims 17 and 29 and their dependent claims 18-28 and 30-32 is respectfully requested.

Petition is hereby made for a three-month extension of the period to respond to the outstanding Official Action to November 7, 2004. A check in the amount of \$980.00, as the Petition fee, is enclosed herewith. If there are any additional charges, or any overpayment, in connection

with the filing of the amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any such deficiency, or credit any such overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 11-1145.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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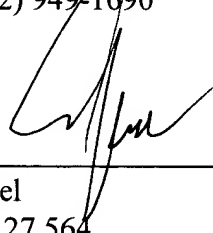
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